

The History of the Worship of Śakti in Mithilā

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The antiquity of the Śakti-worship in Mithilā¹ goes back to remote past, but for the early period there is paucity of literary evidence and it is only on the basis of archaeological finds that we are able to show the prevalence of the Mother Cult in this region. These finds are in the shape of terracotta figurines, female figures depicted on seals and sealings, ring-stones and a gold plaque from Lauriya Nandangarh. It may here be mentioned that when most of the part of northern India had come into Brahmanical fold Mithilā, perhaps, remained outside. It was possibly because Mithilā was predominantly inhabited by the non-Aryan people and their culture and beliefs naturally dominated the area. It was probably due to this reason that though Mithilā was situated in the Mithyavardīya it was excluded from the four traditional division of India. However, the earliest reference to Mithilā can be found in the Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa² where river Sadāyā is mentioned as dividing

1 Mithilā includes the modern districts of Hajipur, Muzaffarpur, Samastipur, Darbhanga, Madhubani, Champaran, Begusarī, Subansī, Purnea and Nepal Terai (Ranchi, Saraikē, Saptarī, Mahārā and Morang (Mitra, J.K. : History of Mithilā Literature, vol. I, p. 14) as according to the legend Viṣṇupurāṇa it is surrounded by the Gandakī river on the east, by Gopātrī on the west, by the Ganges on the south and the Himalaya on the north (Mitra, J.K., op.cit., p. 1). Though the above mentioned description fixes the southern limits of Mithilā to the northern bank of the Ganges it would not be wrong to say that Mithilā-culture also crested the banks of Ganges and spread to the region situated close to her southern bank, as we find coming any report of Aśvins' culture we must take into consideration of Mithilā.

2 Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa, 1. 4. 1.

Videha³ and Kosala. Mithila is also mentioned in the Upanishads and the great sage Yājñyavalkya belonged to Mithila. Still more of the literary sources throw light on the religious condition of the region. However, we can safely presume that due to the predominance of the non-Aryan elements in the area, there was prevalence of the worship of Mother Goddess in Mithila.⁴ In the ancient period the worship of Mother Goddess was widely prevalent not only in India but even outside. The Bronze Age civilisation throughout the world definitely witnessed the worship of Mother Goddess.⁵

The earliest archaeological evidence of the worship of Mother Goddess in Mithila is a gold plaque belonging to the 5th century B. C. discovered from Lauriya Nandangarh, on which a female figure is depicted standing frontal and is absolutely nude with sex-organ clearly indicated. Bloch has identified this figure as Pythia.⁶ A similar gold plaque has been discovered from Syria belonging to the 15th century B. C. bearing the figure of goddess Asarta.⁷ A. B. Keith⁸ does not agree with this identification. A. K. Coomaraswamy,⁹ though admits that proper evidence for such an identification is lacking but he agrees with such a possibility. In spite of the paucity of evidence the identification of the figure with mother goddess should not be doubted. She may be Pythia or a Syrian prototype but she certainly represents a deity.¹⁰

3 It appears that the old name of Mithila was Videha which included Mithila and Videha (Mitra, J. K., *op. cit.*, p. 3).

4 The social and religious organisation of the Vedic Aryans was based upon the principle of 'father right', whereas the representative communities of lower race was based upon the principle of 'mother right'. (Mackenzie : *Indian Myth and Legend*, p. 121). Mackenzie, further, observes that the communities of lower race were worshippers of Mother cult, they held their belief in the shape of folk-religions (*op. cit.*, p. 1).

5 Marshall, J. : *Mohenjodaro and Indus Civilization*, vol. I, p. 50.

6 ASI-AR, 1905-07, 1907, fig. 4; C. H. I. vol. I, p. 618.

7 Neumann, E. : *The Great Mother*, plate I A.

8 Keith, A. B. : *The Religion and Philosophy of the Veda and Upanishads*, 1925, p. 68, note 3.

9 Coomaraswamy, A. K. : *The History of Indian and Indonesian Art*, 1927, p. 10.

10 Dasgupta, G. C. : *Origin and Evolution of Indian Clay Sculpture*, p. 136, note 1.

Archaeological excavations carried out at several sites in the Mithila region have yielded a large number of terracotta object-figurines, seals and sealings and ringstones. A number of them is connected with the Mother Goddess worship. A winged female figure, standing on lotus, is depicted on a terracotta plaque discovered from Basirhi.¹¹ This plaque belongs to the 3rd century B. C. Though it is difficult to explain the wings, it is certain that the figure is religious in character and we may find in it the earliest example of goddess Lakshmi due to lotus depicted as pedestal.¹² Krishna Deva¹³ also pointed out that the Mother Goddess was normally represented at Vaishali by archaic figures, two of such figures came from stratified deposits assigned to Period II (c. 150 B.C.-100 A.D.). A draped goddess holding a very long stalk of lotus has been depicted on a sealing (no. 779 and 442) from Vaishali.¹⁴ All these show that Vaishali maintained a continuous tradition of Mother Goddess worship, which goes to prove its prevalence in Mithila as a whole.

The worship of folk goddesses, e.g. the Yakshi was also very common in Mithila. Mahajanaka Jataka¹⁵ connects the daughter of gods named Mahimabala with Mithila. She was appointed as the guardian of the sea and she was to see that no person possessing such virtues as reverence to mothers fall into the sea. This reference to the reverence for mothers definitely suggests the practice of Mother Goddess worship. On an inscribed fragment of a Kausya railing with a figure of Yakshi (resembling those of Mathura school) was found at Hajipur,¹⁶ and it certainly goes to prove the prevalence of mother cult in Mithila.

11 ASIAR, 1913-14, 1917—pl. Aliv-Basirhi is in the Hajipur District of Bihar, old Patna.

12 Dr. J. N. Banerjee also remarks that Lakshmi very appropriately comes across several times in the sealings dug up at Basirhi and Bhita (see Development of Hindu Iconography, p. 193).

13 Krishna Deva : Vaishali Excavations, 1950, p. 50.

14 ASIAR, 1913-14, pl. Aliv and pl. 1.

15 Cowell, E. B. : The Jataka, pp. 19-37.

16 Foll, D. B. : The Antiquarian remains of Bihar, p. 138. It came from a small ruined temple at Jharua within the municipal limits of Hajipur town. It was found by Mr. Pandey in 1918-1919.

The ring stone of steatite discovered from Vaishali belonging to the strata assigned to 150 B.C.-100 A.D. deserves mention. It has a honey-suckle motif, pāśa tree, winged lion and two attractive female figures carved on it. These female figures are usual Mother Goddesses.¹¹ Agrawala suggests a close resemblance with the figure on the gold plaque from Lauriya Arang.¹²

From Vaishali few examples of the figure of the goddess is associated with lotus, either standing on lotus or holding long stalk of lotus, thus giving indication of its connection with the conception of Lakṣmī. The Gajalakṣmī or Māyā being bathed by two elephants was a favourite subject in early Buddhist art and here at Vaishali this conception of Gajalakṣmī is only achieved in the 4th-5th century A.D. A large official seal (no. 200) from Vaishali depicts Lakṣmī standing on a low pedestal facing two customary elephants above pouring water over her from jars held in trunks.¹³ This shows that during the Gupta period the worship of the principle of Śakti was fully established.

The archaeological evidence, therefore, clearly shows that in Mithilā Mother Goddess cult was predominant and was a popular form of religion. Buddhism no doubt penetrated into Mithilā quite early but the attachment of the people of this region with Mother Cult could not be pushed in to oblivion. Naturally, in Mithilā Śakti worship was equally popular, besides Śaivism and Vaiṣṇavism, and the Maṅghikas, as a whole, were stronger supporters of Varyāharama Dharma, Śiva, Śakti and Viṣṇu being the main deities of the Maṅghikas in the realm of religion. Though Hinduism emerged stronger holding the importance of the concept of Trinity (Brahmā, Viṣṇu and Maheśa), we note a gradual change in it, as Brahmā was neglected and in its place came Śakti and thereby a gradual harmonisation of Śaivism, Vaiṣṇavism and Śaktism was established.¹⁴ "This new type of trinitarianism

¹¹ Agrawala, V. S., *Indian Art*, p. 80.

¹² *ASB-AR*, 1913-14, p. 134.

¹³ Choudhary, R. K. : *Mithilā in the Age of Vidyasākh*, p. 307.

in Mithila was due to the influence of Tāntric belief and practices" observes R. K. Choudhary.²⁰

Further, we find that the Maithilis are essentially worshippers of Śakti as the first verse taught to a Maithili child at the beginning of his educational career is in praise of Śakti.²¹ The Salsara (sister) of the women of Mithila, the non-vegetarian character of her people, the predominance of Tāntric belief in the region, the prevalence of Mārkāpūjā almost in every house and the importance attached to the Gosaulghara—all these show that the religious belief of the Maithilas was greatly influenced by the Śakti.²²

The prevalence of the Mother Goddess cult immensely helped in the growth of Tāntric cult which further moulded the life of the Maithilas. We have ample evidence to show that Tāntricism was very popular in Mithila. Its influence was so much so that even the names of the people used to be associated with Tantra and Śakti. J. K. Mishra refers to the names of Maithilas like Tantradharī, Tantrasūtra, Śaktināth, Khadgadharī, Tantrarāga, Ādyācarnya etc.²³ The characteristic head-dress of the Maithilas called 'Paga' has a Tāntric origin. Moreover, red coloured dress is very favourite with the Maithilas. The script of Maithili called Mithilālipāra or Trilonā has developed in accordance with Tāntric Yantras, the details of which has been given in Kāmadhenu Tantra and Vajradhara Tantra.²⁴ Further, the Arjuna closely associated with the Tāntric Cakra, beside, festival of Īmāria, predominance of Vijayādashamī ceremony and its association with Śakti, all give the same impression that Śakti worship in Mithila was predominant.²⁵

20. Mithila in the age of Viśvāpati.

21. *सर्वे मया स्तुता स्त्री शिवमूर्तिः ।*

सर्वे मया स्तुता मया स्तुता स्त्रीः ।

Cf. Gopabandhu Jha : *Kāvirahasya*, p. 10; for details Cf. Mahālakṣmī of Mithila Mishra for various details about the daily life of the people of Mithila; Sankar Choudhary : *Mithiladashamī*; also Cf. Claude, R. P. : *Indo-Aryan Race* p. 153 ff.

22. Choudhary, R. K. : *op. cit.*, p. 304.

23. Mishra, J. K. : *op. cit.*, p. 21.

24. *Ibid.*

25. Choudhary, R. K. : *op. cit.*, pp. 311-12.

To trace the origin of Tāntricism in Mithilā we may show that Tāntric culture penetrated into the life of Mithilā since the days of Maṇḍana Mītra, if not earlier. Vidyapati Mītra, in his commentary on the Patanjali-Darśana, has recommended the Dhyāna as prescribed in the Tantras. Various books on the methods and procedure of the Tāntric worship were written in Mithilā. Thus Mithilā also contributed towards the development of Tāntric literature and scholars like Devāditya, Vaidhānā, Maṇḍana Upādhyāya, and Gaṅgānātha are believed to have written on Tāntric philosophy. Gaṅgānātha is believed to have been an accomplished Tāntric. Devanātha wrote *Mantra-Kaumudi* and *Tantra-Kaumudi* and these two works deal with the details of Tantra worship. Vidyapati is taken to be the author of *Āgamaśivānand-nirṇaya*. *Tārābhaktisūdhārṇava* of Narasimha deals with the worship not only of Tārā but of other forms of Śakti as well. In some other manuscripts this work is also known as *Kālībhaktisūdhārṇava*. Gadādhara wrote *Tantra-dīpa*. Cōḍānagō composed *Siddhakamandatu*²⁶ and Śrīśaṅkha wrote *Bhavaśūbhaktisūdhārṇava*. These two works belong to the leftist form of worship (Vāmaśāstra and Kulaśāstra). This shows that in Mithilā Tāntricism was very popular rather it was strengthened as a number of works on Tāntric literature was written by Mithilā scholars. True to this fact there is a tradition according to which Tantras originated in Gauṇḍa, developed in Mithilā, practised in Maharashtra and decayed in Gujara country.²⁷

In Mithilā two prominent sects of the Tāntric cult were prevalent—*Dakṣiṇācāra* and *Vāmācāra*. While one was philosophical and devotional the other was revolting. *Cikrapājā* is observed by the Vāmācārins, in which the votaries of both the sexes gather round a *Čakra* or circle and indulge in mass promiscuousness. Narasimha Thakur, a Mithilā Tāntric writer has given the details of this rite in his work entitled *Tārābhaktisūdhārṇava*. In chapter VI

26 It quotes two verses from *Tārāpradīpa* defining the scope of the Vedas, Purāṇas and the Tantras. The Tantras are meant for the Kali age and for low class people or *śūdras* (गुरुः शूद्रजनो न भवति शिष्यजनः)

27 ऐतं पञ्चाङ्गिक विद्या वैदिकीः शस्त्रोक्तम् ।

सर्वेषां सविष्णुसत्त्वे गुरोः शरणं यथा ।

Quoted by R. P. Chanda in his 'Indo-Aryan Review,' p. 113 f. n.

of this work, types of women²⁸ required for this *pūjā* are enumerated and in Chapter IV a detailed description of the horrible "Bṛasādhana" practices, also known as Cātāsādhana has been given. The Dakṣiṇāmūrti shows these horrible practices. R. K. Choudhary has analysed the available references and comes to the conclusion that Tantricism exercised a very potent influence on the development of Mithili culture.²⁹ According to the Tantric belief gods descend to take their seat on these diagrams,³⁰ which also represent the female organs. The Yantras are complex diagrams and some of the Aṣṭanaga and Kulabhar paintings are intimately connected with the fertility organs and agricultural products.³¹ The Panchamakāras are pleasing to gods is mentioned in the Tantric texts. Caṇḍeśvara³² on the authority of Devīpurāṇa has tried to show that if one does not talk or behave indecently, he incurs the wrath of the Goddess. Sexual indulgence is one of the five Panchamakāras. In the Kālāpurāṇa (61- 2422) also sexual indulgence has been referred to. Several other works like the Gandharvatāntara, Kāmakhyāntara, Mūlāśāstracakra, Nirvāṇātāntara etc. prescribe sexual connections as part of the ceremony.³³

The worship of Śakti, therefore, brought in its train different forms of Tantric worship. Vidyapati, the famous poet of Mithilā, has thrown sufficient light on the importance of Śakti worship in his *Durgābhaktirasāngī*. Though he was a devotee of Śiva but he was equally attached to Śakti. In Mithilā in the age of Vidyapati the triad of Śaśīta Brāhmanical Hinduism (Śiva, Śakti and Viṣṇu) was accepted by all sections of the people.³⁴ Jyotiśvara, a four-

28 Nāga, Kāpālikai, Vajra, Dhobina, Nāgita, Brāhmana, Jāṭra, Gāṛhita and Māṭra are names—This description, from a Mithili writer of repute, enables us to arrive at the conclusion that Tantricism, or at least a type of it, had been intimately associated with those castes and professions that were despised for many centuries; for other castes cf. Dasgupta, S. B., *Obscure Religious Sects*, pt II, cf. pp. 62-63.

29 Choudhary, R. K. : *op. cit.*, p. 313.

30 Vaidya, N. N. : *Vivakha* (Darbhanga) 17, 145.

31 Choudhary, R. K. : *op. cit.*, p. 313.

32 Kṛtyaratnākara, p. 362.

33 Choudhary, R. K. : *op. cit.*, p. 313; *Kṛtyaratnākara*, 362.

34 Choudhary, R. K. : *op. cit.*, p. 308.

twelfth century Mithilī writer has also thrown light on Śakti worship. In his *Vaṅgaratnākara* (severals ballads) describes the country and the burning ground and mentions therein eight kinds of Śaktis, besides eight kinds of Bhairava.³⁵ This testifies to the Māyūkā Pūjā being prevalent in Mithilā. In the gambling section he mentions that the gambling house was to be situated near the temple of Devi.³⁶ He mentions Nidandihā-maṇḍal under Nṛtya-varṇanā (30 ka). He has also given the list of sixty-four Yoginīs.³⁷ Dr. Leblinjan Jha has pointed out that Jyotirīvara in his *Vaṅgaratnākara* mentioned Devī-bhāgavat among the Purāṇa or Mahāpurāṇa as Devīpurāṇa and he appears to have placed Devībhāgavata over the Bhāgavatapurāṇa, as Bhāgavata had been related there under Upapurāṇa.³⁸ Dr. Jha, further, deduces that Jyotirīvara himself was a Śākta, though in Mithilā the same person could be a Śaiva, Śākta and Vaiṣṇava at the same time.³⁹ The high place given to Devībhāgavata by Jyotirīvara is a clear proof of the importance of Śakti-worship in Mithilā in the thirteenth century A. D. However, in course of time the place of Devībhāgavata was taken up by the Durgāmparāśa of the Mārkaṇḍeya Purāṇa.

The predominance of Śakti-worship in Mithilā combined with Tāntriks had its influence on other religious sects also. The Pañcarātra system of the Vaiṣṇavas was also popular in Mithilā. R. P. Chanda has tried to show that there was some connection between the Pañcarātra system and the various kinds of Tantra.⁴⁰ In the Kṛṣṇa-Rādhā story, Rādhā was regarded as the Śakti.⁴¹ Umāpattī pays obeisance to Bhavānī, Hārī and Śiva (the trīśa of the

35 *Vaṅgaratnākara*, ed. Sacchidanāth Chatterjee, p. XXX.

36 *Ibid.*, p. XXXI.

37 *Ibid.*, p. 57—Kāmalī, Chāmapālā, Kālikā, Kāvalyā, Ratnasūrī, Tāṭkālīkī, Vajrakālī, Ugrakālī, Jhālīkālī, Bhūkālī, Nirmālakā, Akṣāmāyī, Pūṣkālī, Bhavāndī, Kurukullā, etc.

38 *IBR*, vol. XXXVII, pt. 1-2, p. 123.

39 *Ibid.*, p. 152.

40 Chanda, R. P. : *Indo-Aryan Sacra*, 505.

41 R. K. Choudhary refers to the Telugu inscription of Bhājavarmān which refers to Kṛṣṇa as sporting with hundreds of people and the association of Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa as witnessing Brahmā in this story (*op. cit.*, p. 312).

Sacred Brahmagical Hinduism). Similarly, Cakrelvara in his *Kṛtyaratna-kara* (verses 1, 2) pays tributes to Gauri and Śaṅkari at the same time to the fish and tortoise incarnations of Viṣṇu. In his *Pujāratna-kara*, he discusses the Tāntric rules regarding Śiva, Durgā, Viṣṇu and Sūrya.⁴² Jyotirīvara offered tributes to Śiva, Viṣṇu, Kālī, Hari, Kṛṣṇa and others, while Vidyapati believed in the unity of Godhead and conceived of Śakti behind Nārāyaṇa as nourisher and sustainer.⁴³ Dr. S. Chattopadhyaya refers to the story of Yogamāyā in the Viṣṇupurāṇa which shows that the followers of the Bhāgavata were gradually making alliance with the Tāntric mother cult.⁴⁴ There is considerable evidence in Sahajiyā and Nātha cults and both Jyotirīvara and Vidyapati refer to the Nātha cult.⁴⁵

Mithilā was considered to be one of the important Śaktapīṭhas of India and a number of sites⁴⁶ are connected with Tāntric cults. A passage from Rudrayāmala quoted in the Kulārpaya Tantra actually speaks of eighteen pīṭhas among which Mithilā is one.⁴⁷ In the Pīṭhanirṇaya golden Mahāmāyā is associated with Nepāl, Garṇāḍi and Cagṛā with Garṇāḍi, and Uṇā and Mahādevī with Mithilā.⁴⁸ In the Śivachūṛita which closely follows Pīṭhanirṇaya with a little variation⁴⁹ we find only Mahādevī associated with Mithilā, Mahāmāyā and Navadurgā with Nepāl and Amārī with Tibbat (or Tibbatukṛtī). R. K. Choudhary observes : "The very appearance of some of the important Śaktapīṭhas of Mithilā would convince even a lay man that they were formerly the centres of Buddhist esoteric cults later converted into the Śaktapīṭhas—the Jay-

42 Choudhary, R. K. : *op. cit.*, p. 313.

43 *Ibid.*

44 Chattopadhyaya, S. : *The Evolution of Theistic Sects in Ancient India*, p. 132.

45 Cf. *Govindapūjā-nāṭaka* of Vidyapati.

46 Ugratirthasthāna at Mahinī (Saharān), Kātyāyanīsthāna, Jayamūṛgā (Begunā Dham), Uchchakṛā (Madhuban Dist.), Jaashpur (in Nepāl Terai), Chāmpīsthāna (Mungerpur).

47 Sircar, D. C. : *The Śaktapīṭhas*, p. 11.

48 *Ibid.*, p. 35.

49 *Ibid.*, p. 40.

paṅgalāśaṭṭha, Ugratārā temple and the Kāryāyanasthāna may be cited as examples in this connection.⁵⁰

A reference to the practice of drawing aripanas may here be made, in which instead of fingers, only the middle finger is used. The outer form of it are often symbolical of the Tantric design, and some inner features are related to the Śākta creed.⁵¹ The patterns of these aripanas are generally representing natural phenomena and different other objects including triangle connected with Gaṇa.⁵² R. K. Choudhury observes, "The geometrical shapes, mainly triangular and circular, are often used in aripanas for certain kinds of worship such as Tuxaripāṇ for unmarried girls, Pṛthivīpāṇ etc."⁵³ He further informs that in paṣṣā pāṇ aripana is used and the Kojagaraka aripana is meant to welcome Lakṣmī.⁵⁴ We may here presume that in the origin of these aripanas tantric elements played a vital role.

In Mithilā, which had a long tradition of Śakti worship, a number of folk goddesses were also worshipped. Goddess Manasa was widely worshipped in this region, no doubt, her worship was prevalent in the entire eastern India. She is essentially a snake goddess but at the same time a powerful mother goddess. In the north of Śāwara, the people gather together in a place of their choice at night and a few of them tell the story of Lakṣmī and Behulā with singing and dancing. The famous poet of Mithilā, Vidyāpati, composed in Sanskrit a work entitled "Vyāṭi Bhakti Tanuṅgi", a treatise on Manasa worship. The story of this text differs in few points in broad outline, it corresponds to that current in Bengal and as Hām observes: "It may be that the popular story current here (Bengal) was adopted by the people of Mithilā as a local tradition was found or the same story was prevalent in Mithilā from older days. Whatever might have been the case it seems probable that the writer worked upon what he got in his own society."⁵⁵ The story of Manasa

50 Choudhury, R. K., op. cit., p. 311.

51 Ibid., p. 362.

52 Ibid.

53 Ibid.

54 Ibid.

55 New Indian Antiquary, vol. III, nos. 344, 1944, pp. 45-57.

is given in the Prakṛitkandha of Bhāṭṭarāyaṇa's Purāṇa and Devībhāgavata Purāṇa. The first chapter, adhyāya 47. 180; 48, 49. The story depicted in the Mānasa-jaya or Vīṇāśakti-cīṇ by Śukumarā Śaṅkṛ. Aṣṭ- 113, Lakṣmī of Doga either showing struggle between the forms of Śiva and form of Mānasa or Cānaka arrives out from the rivalry between the philosophy of Śaivism and Śākṣism, but from a fact between the masses people and religious leaders, who had the interest on cultural level, a class which naturally involves the religious way worshippers.⁵⁵ According to Bhagya, it is presented the struggle of Śaivism against the growth and spread of Śākṣism.⁵⁶ Bhagya's view appears to be more logical since Māhātā had a long era living of Mānasa (Gangā) and there might have been struggle between Śākṣi and Śaivism in the remote past in which Śākṣism came victorious. The impact of Śākṣi worship on the life of Śaivism is quite apparent.

In connection with the Mānasa is a few facts to be examined. We find that the story of Lakṣmī and Rāhul is attached with the worship of Mānasa. There is a great controversy among the scholars with regard to the identification of the birth place of Chāṣṭi, the legendary hero of the story connected with the Mānasa worship.⁵⁷ Some scholars believe that the birth place of Chāṣṭi, Chāmpakṛāṇḍa, is near to the district of Bardhaman (Bengal) Others like Basant Ranjan Ray, D. C. Sen, A. Bhattacharya etc., maintain the birth of Rāhul. It would not be strange to believe that Chāṣṭi lived in Chāmpa or Chāmpakṛāṇḍa in the district of Bhāgya. Since and that is why the birth place of Rāhul was near by.⁵⁸ Let us at first and support

55 Since the goddess came out of the mind of Kāṭya while he was in meditation she is called Mānasa. She was married to Lord Śiva and he had a son named Āṣṭa, in the Bhāṭṭarāyaṇa Purāṇa we find the conflict between Bhāṭṭarāyaṇa and Mānasa mentioned.

56 Choudhary R. K. & op. cit., p. 303.

57 Bhagya, S. B. Occult Religious Cult. Ind., p. XXXI.

58 For details see controversy see, 2. K. Maitra's 'Historical Studies in the cult of Mānasa', p. 20.

59 Ibid., also see Nityanāth Ray, 'Mānasa-Śakti' p. 17. D. C. Sen, 'Vāgdeva Purāṇa', in I, p. 17; Bhāṭṭarāyaṇa, ed. Basant Ranjan Ray, Ind., pp. 46.

it. People also point out in the supreme chamber in the village of Jani, close to the site of Champā; and a fair is also held in honour of Bishāl in the temple of Śrīrām near Nāthnagar. Moreover such fairs are very common all over the Mithilā region. At Bīrānā⁸¹ in the Muzaffargarh district, during the month of Naga-sukla, a fair is held in commemoration of the worship of Bishāl. Similar fairs are held in a number of places.⁸² It appears that Bengal and Bihar both had been the centre of Mithilāprajā, whether Chāṇakya belonged to Aśvā Bhāṅgāpur⁸³ or originally he belonged to Chāṇakya Bhāṅgāpur and later on migrated to Rāṅgīrāṅg in the Muzaffargarh district,⁸⁴ is a historical question. The popularity of the story and the worship of Bishāl is our main concern. The worship of Bishāl was definitely popular in Mithilā and so the story of Lakṣmīdevī and Bishāl also became popular in this region. It became the popular devotional songs of Mithilā. The devotional and emotional character could not fail in inspiring the great Vidyāpati poet Vidyapati who composed 'Bishāl Bishāl Tārangīnī' on this theme.

The Mithilāhela rivers are great goddesses and worshipped highly important rivers of the land as goddesses. Mithilā has been a land of rivers and the rivers played a great role in socio-economic system of the land, their deification, therefore, was quite natural. The great river of northern India, Gaṅgā is held as a great goddess and her names are also found. The tradition of Gaṅgā-worship is also prominent in the life of Mithilā. Gaṅgādevī informs Jai on the seventh day in the bright part of Vaisākha Gaṅgā was worshipped.⁸⁵ The worship of Gaṅgā occupies an important place in the life of Bishāl, particularly in the case of the Mithilā. The story of the love for Gaṅgā of the famous Mithilā poet Vidyapati is very popular in Mithilā.

81 Muzaffargarh District Gazetteer, by P. L. Roychoudhury 1919, p. 31.

82 R. K. Choudhary notes that such worship was widely prevalent in Mithilā and different versions of the Bishāl story in Mithilā go to show that the tradition is very old. The Mitha Panchang is also observed with due reverence throughout the country, thus in Mithilā, it has got special significance. Mithilā in the Age of Vidyapati, p. 301.

83 Ray H. L. Mithilāśāhīnī Indīā, p. 67—The tradition is recorded.

84 Kalyāṇakāra, p. 139.

Another river of the same name is Kaly with its influence on the life of the people of Sabara and Purna districts. There she is generally known as Kalyani, a memberhood is attached to the river goddess. Kamala is another river goddess, representing river Kamala, also she is the goddess of life and therefore much continuously worshipped by the Mallahs, fishermen. The background to this play is provided by the song of Kamala. Kamala is *gita* which narrates her brave exploits and other deeds.

Chakravara in his *Kavya-pravartana* gives the list of festivals celebrated in Mithila on different months. Many festivals we find connected with the worship of goddess. The eleventh day of the bright half of the month of Caitra was held in the honour of Rudra⁶⁵. The worship of Rudra, the wife of Kṛṣṇa, suggests the principle of Śakti has its predominance in Mithila. It also shows that the early worship of Kṛṣṇa was worshipping, which was due to the popularity of the Pañcārātra school of Vajrapani. On the twelfth day (Mādhava-dvādśī) Mādhava was worshipped and which continued on the following two days of the bright half.⁶⁶ This function was very popular as it was known as Mādhava or Kāma Mādhava.⁶⁷ Kāma is a god of love and his worship attaches importance to the sensual aspect of religion, usually a special feature of the Vāṇīśvara Tāntric form of worship. There is no denying the fact that Mithilā had been a seat of Tāntric religion, particularly of the Vāṇīśvara faction. On the month of Jyēṣṭha on the fourteenth day of the bright half, the birth day of goddess Laxmī was celebrated with great pomp and splendour by all sections of women.⁶⁸ Laxmī is a great member goddess. She is the spouse of Śiva and the worship of this form of Śakti is well established in this region. Śūdra Devi's birth was celebrated on the eighth day.⁶⁹ She is

65. 'Kāvya-saṅgaḥ' by R. K. Choudhary in the *Spāk* of 1934.

66. R. K. Choudhary in his book entitled 'The Mithilā in the Age of Vidyāpati' gives the list of festivals, see pp. 293-307.

67. *Kṛṣṇa-raṅgam*, p. 24.

68. *Ibid.*, pp. 115-16; 128.

69. *Ibid.*, pp. 27-29; *Modern Review* March 1916, pp. 292-97 for 17th festival.

70. *Ibid.*, p. 126.

71. *Ibid.*, p. 140, She is the goddess who killed demons.

another goddess of importance worshipped by the Malchikars as long during the age of Carakavara.

The Vapachuvai day was celebrated on the Jyestha Purnima at Carakavara in former.⁷² According to him a jar filled with rice, fruits, various plants was to be prepared and a copper plate was to be placed on the jar with the image of Bhairava and Sarika.⁷³ As popularly believed this worship came from somewhere. It is essentially a women's festival and is still a popular festival among the women not only of Malakka but of the whole of India. No doubt the story of Savita and Sa yav-dia is associated with this festival. Whatever be the derivation of this day is no doubt that Savita is associated with it. In this worship of Bhairava and Sarika together the very first form of the worship of Bhairava, the mother and her son Savita who is also his husband.

The worship of Durga is very popular in Malakka since creation. The Kirtana Purana. It is the 10th incarnation of Durga by king, Anaka of Mitih.⁷⁴ It is celebrated with all pomp and show all over Malakka. Carakavara also gives the details of the worship of all goddesses. Usually Durgapuja is celebrated in the month of Kartika. Carakavara has also mentioned a number of forms of Durga as worshipped on different days. According to him the image of Durga was worshipped on the ninth day of Tishya, and various gods and goddesses were offered food.⁷⁵ The mention of various gods of special significance from our point of view. This gives us the impression that this was a great festival in the religious belief of the Malchikars. Besides Durgapuja in the month of Bhadra, on the ninth day of the full moon, Durga image was worshipped and the

72 Ibid, pp. 57-58.

73 Ibid, p. 195.

74 Kumar, Dr. Panchajanya. Sanskrit in Ancient India, p. 26. Dr. Kumar also refers to the tradition that Ramanandacharya of Ayodhya was the first to celebrate the various forms of the goddess. But he further informs that no clue to this tradition can be traced in the present Valmiki Ramayana.

75 Kirtanapurana, p. 115.

Chandkhara informs.⁷⁶ He further informs that on the ninth day of the bright half of this month the Durgā was worshipped along with Janardana, Gopeta, Varuga and Vanaspati with wheat. The worship of Vairava was also celebrated on the eighth day of the dark half of the month of Āṣvina.⁷⁷ Chandkhara recommends the holding of the festival of Durgā on the ninth day of Āṣvina.⁷⁸ This festival is also known as Navamī-brahmāṣṭam.⁷⁹ Śaṅkha was worshipped on the fourth day of the bright day and Bhadrakālī⁸⁰ on the eighth day. Bhadrakālī was required to destroy the sacrifice of Durgā. From seventh day to the ninth day of the bright half of the month Durgā-worship was celebrated. Śaṅkha Durgā Pūjā is held throughout Mithā and particularly in Mithila during this period. Besides, the worship of Lalāṁ Gaurī (on the Kārtika amāvāsya) and the day on which Durgā is celebrated, Gaṇa was worshipped on the third day of Āṣvina and Śiva on the eighth day of the dark half of Phalguṇa.

On examination of the above list of festivals we find that throughout the year one or the other goddess was worshipped. The goddess connected with these festivals are, Kūkaninī, Lāṁ Śaṅkha, Śukla Devi, Durgā with Gopeta, Varuga and Vanaspati, Bhadrakālī, Vairava, Lalāṁ Gaurī, Śiva etc. Among all these Durgā's worship on different days has been recommended. Kūkaninī's worship gives an idea of the popularity of Vairava and Śaṅkha. Vairava is also connected with Vajrayāna. Gaṇa and Bhadrakālī are also associated with Śiva as they are his lakṣmī.

The ancient remains of monuments and sculptures discovered from Mithila do testify to the fact that Śākta worship was widely prevalent here. Several places may be connected with it and which may have been important centres of Śākta-worship. Ichānua⁸¹ is an important centre of Śākta-worship.

76 Kṛtyamālā, pp. 251-64.

77 Ibid., pp. 285-86.

78 Ibid. pp. 307-310.

79 Ibid. pp. 314-315.

80 Choudhary, L. K., op. cit., p. 298.

81 Kṛtyamālā, p. 342.

82 Ibid., p. 351.

83 Darbhanga District Gazetteer, ed. P. C. Raychaudhary, 1964, p. 752.

It is situated 32 miles north of Dibrugarh and at this place on the bank of a tank a temple is situated. The temple contains a four armed goddess. Her Vahana is an eagle and the image is of Simhavaraha. Durgā has her hand in dancing. A kalas (flower) can be seen on a top of the tank. Besides the principal image some small images have also been found and many others have also been discovered at the tank. The images belonging to the Pala-Sena period and others are sculptured out of blackstone. This place appears to have been a very important centre of Śakti-worship during the Pala-Sena period. The discovery of several images from this place is a clear evidence, no doubt, that the remains of the present temple is a recent structure. It is interesting to note that this place is associated with the name of Kālī as according to local tradition Abhīlāṣa is said to have worshipped the goddess here and her blessings made him a great king. As the temple is associated with a tradition it is a certainty that people from far and near place come here to worship and offer sacrifices. An image of Durgā is at worship at the village Kumbpur, Dibrugarh, which on the basis of an inscription on its pedestal is dated in 1753-54 A.D. by D.C. Sutar.¹⁴ Among other monuments mention may be made of a Gupta Temple situated in the village of Pharpur in Madhubani district (4 miles south of Haridkoti).¹⁵ Though Gupta related to Parvati but possibly the temple is connected with the worship of Śakti, wife of Lord Rāma. Canggalavarā also informs about the celebration of the anniversary of Śakti.¹⁶ Abhīlāṣhāna¹⁷ is an Ahom village two miles south of Kamdāy River station) in Dibrugarh district is also an important centre of Śakti-worship and people from all part of M. India come to worship at this place. The present temple contains the footprint of Śakti at various places and worship.¹⁸

¹⁴ IDS, XXXVII, pt. 1-4, pp. 9-15.

¹⁵ Dibrugarh District Gazetteer, p. 317.

¹⁶ Kṛtyasamudhaya, p. 5-8.

¹⁷ The place is named after the legendary wife of sage Chaitanya who was turned into stone by a curse and her living wife could become possible by the touch of the feet of Rāmachandra.

¹⁸ Paul D. B. The Ahomization Remains in Sikkim, p. 2: The present temple was built in 1817 by Maharaja Chhatra Singh Bahadur of Dibrugarh.

At Inadpur⁸⁹ 12 miles northwest of Hajipur, from an extensive search a large number of sculptures were discovered. A large group of three bronze figures of Mahadeva, Subhadra and Kṛṣṇa-Viṣṇoḍeva has been discovered from here. The discovery of this group of images clearly proves the prevalence of Pāṇḍura form of Vaiṣṇavism which was definitely influenced by Tāntricism. Patrick identified another group of bronze figures with Nāṭhara, Lakṣmī and Śarasvatī.⁹⁰ The images of Lakṣmī and Śarasvatī testified to the worship of these goddesses in this region. In still another group one Maṅgikā along with Gaurā and Virabhadra have been represented,⁹¹ which shows that the worship of the Kṛṣṇas was also in practice at this place. The association of Hajipur area with the old cults goddesses is proved by the Vaidik excavations, moreover from a small ruined temple at Jharua situated in Hajipur town a kṛṣṇa railing with a figure of Vaiṣṇvi has been discovered.⁹² The worship of golden Tāl was prevalent at Vaidik is referred to by the Tibetan traveller Dharmasīkāśi and who also informs that the image worship in the Buddhist shrines was identical to the Hindu shrines.⁹³

At Burpur⁹⁴ in the Begusarai district 3 miles from Tilaiyā Rly. station, the images of goddesses have been found in excellent condition, including of Kālī and Navadurga and all of them are now worshipped by the villagers. Another important centre of Sakta worship may be identified with Jayamāṅgal-garh.⁹⁵ Devī Jayamāṅgalī or Durgā is worshipped here. Jayamāṅgalī is another name of Durgā or Bhavāī - a painted figure of whom may be seen in the

⁸⁹ Ibid., p. 172.

⁹⁰ Ibid., p. 172.

⁹¹ Ibid., p. 172.

⁹² Ibid., p. 173.

⁹³ Choudhary, B. K., op. cit., p. 305.

⁹⁴ Monghyr District Gazetteer, ed. P. C. Roychoudhary, 1900, p. 462.

⁹⁵ Ibid., p. 462. The island in the Tila which is sacred spot was kept revenue free during permanent settlement and government made yearly grant of expenses for feeding monks and keeping a hosp which burnt day and night for the people, this grant continued from 1793-1852.

reliefs. The structure of the temple is also believed to be ancient. The place still holds its importance in the region and devoted men far distant places gather to pay homage to the goddess. Another important centre in the district may be identified with Sanyasi⁸⁶ from where the broken figures of goddesses have been found in dark stone. The identity of these images is difficult to establish. They may be Apurva, but there is more probability of their being as the representations of the Mother in different forms of Durgā, since in the neighbourhood we find Kālī, Navadurga and Jyotsnādurga were worshipped. Bhadrakāla was before a division of images in the place underneath a tree on the boundary and he perhaps one of them representing a female figure. Considering the fact and tradition⁸⁷ naturally the figure is questioned should be taken as the representation of the Great Goddess Durgā-Sanyasi⁸⁸. Hence in the 9th-10th centuries this region must have seen a strong centre of Śakti-worship.

The impact of Śakti-worship was not confined to the district of Sakar. Rather Tantricism made its headway in this district quite early, and the cult of Tara has been very popular here. Mahua has seen a very popular seat of Buddhist worship and is still kept with great reverence by the people of this area even today. This place is said to be associated with the great Mahāyāna philosopher Nagarjuna who was the origin of Mahāyāna Tantricism may be traced to Mahua⁸⁹. He visited most different parts of the country known as the Mahāyāna established by Mahāyāna. Besides Sanyasi, Yasaigar and Durgacharya are also associated with Sakar district⁹⁰. Vidyacharya had the name Kanyasā in Mahāyāna tradition though another view connects him with a village of the Samantpur district. According to the local tradition it was the famous Śākyapīṭha where the eyes of Śaivite, naturally becoming an important centre of Śakti-worship. The Nilasarani

⁸⁶ Nupurīa District Gazetteer, 1960, p. 417.

⁸⁷ Puri, O. R., op. cit., p. 524.

⁸⁸ Sakar District Gazetteer, ed. P. C. Raychaudhary, '63, p. 21. As Mahua the Buddhist temple is found and Mahāyāna Mahā was a great devotee of this later Buddhist deity incorporated into Hindu from Tibet through Nepal (Sakar District Gazetteer, 1964, p. 491).

⁸⁹ Ibid.

of Mahiśi may be identified with the deity *Maṇiśa* (मणिश) of which we get a veiled reference in the Sanskrit inscription of Nāgarāja.¹⁰⁰ Dr. C. Sircar has observed that the association with Mahiśi is

In the district of Purnea the worship of Kṣaṇ is equally popular. In every village, we find an image in every house, even of Mohanmukha, a Hindu deity called Mahamukha whose prayers are offered before the image of Kṣaṇ. The Temples of Kṣaṇ and Durgā are also found at Laxmipur and Barar respectively.¹⁰¹

The Mahābhārata, one of the epic poems of the Mahābhārata school of Buddhism, gave a spirit of superstition and impractical character to Buddhist teachings. They were very powerful in Mahiśa, practically isolating the region from Vārāṇasī in Purnea—a region described by the orthodox Buddhists as heretical. The Tantra which grew from the Mahābhārata permeated the life of the Mahiśi so very deeply that a Tantric tradition became as essential for them as the Vedic one, and it was in Mahiśa that Buddhism was completely assimilated into Brāhmaṇism—on Tantra and the Vedānta, resulting into the conversion of the Buddhist sites with the Tantric places.¹⁰²

The traditional accounts mention that the extent of Mahiśa in the south is river Ganges but it would not be unfair to say that Mahiśa culture spread over south of the Ganges and the parts of the districts of Bhagalpur and Almor-

100 Sabarna District Gazetteer, 1963, p. 7.

101 Ibid., Cf. Choudhury R. K. Descriptions of Bihar, p. 74.

102 Sircar, D. C. The Śaiva Saṅgāh, pp. 151-52; The text of the text is a fearful deity with a face of human face on her neck and her body is standing on a dead body. There should be further another mudra image on the forehead. Phallakṣa, in Indian Buddhist Encyclopedia, p. 50. The Vajrasaṅg image of Mahiśi is not as mentioned by Bhattacharya. In the two images of Kṣaṇ and Mahamukha on either side. The image of Mahiśi appears to be of 'Kṣaṇ' and 'Tāra'.

103 Purnea District Gazetteer, ed. P. C. Bouchodhary, 1963, p. 163.

104 Ibid., p. 177.

105 Sabarna District Gazetteer, 1963, p. 24; Almost all the important Tantric sites of north Bihar, especially Jayramnagar, Mahiśi were formerly the seat of Mahāyāna Buddhism after converted into Phalva.

gods along the coasted were definitely influenced by — the mother-
 part of these Hindu — came under the influence of Sakya-worship. At Sranghe-
 rib,¹⁰⁶ one of the peaks of the Kanakapuri group of hills (situated 20 miles
 south-west of Moulmein) a relief of a female figure in black stone (two feet
 high) was found. The figure is standing on two round, low long bases
 which give support to two solid elephants. Smaller female figures, carved on
 the same block of stone, stand at the two lower corners on either side
 of the larger image. These figures are probably Devi-Kumari and now they
 are worshipped by the Thavak, the bigger image as Parvati and the smaller
 ones as Ganga and Sakti.¹⁰⁷ The principal female deity, however, for earlier
 period in Malay, was the goddess of holding two long snakes supporting elephants.
 The Gajalakshmi conception, however, is more common as the elephants sprinkle
 water over the goddess and thus become a part of the figure in sculpture.
 The use of darkstone for the relief depicts in the figure in 1946
 continued. The worship of Kālī (one of the consorts of Śiva) is very common
 in this area, and a number of temples connected with this goddess is found in
 the Kanakapuri region.¹⁰⁸ At Haguna, 2 miles to the north-west of Lakh-
 sawi Bay station, we find a sculpture of the goddess Bīṣṇu.¹⁰⁹ A base of a
 female figure, a seated goddess, adorned by an umbrella bearer and other
 three figures probably in supplementary have been found. Śiva has also been
 found depicted with a consort including a female deity with Lakṣmī. The
 association of the goddess with Śiva is made her Lakṣmī Ganga. We also
 find the images of Kālī and Ganga at this place. Hence we notice members
 of the Śiva family here depicted. The base of the female figure adorned by
 an umbrella bearer may be associated with the principal consort of Śiva, thus

106 Moulmein District Gazetteer ed P. C. Raychaudhuri, 1960 p. 54.

107 Ibid., p. 519: A temple of Sakti or Sandhya was built by Kalyanacharya Dja in 1892. A temple at Daphurak recorded in a Nagari inscription found on the shore-
 way of Patil, D. R., op. cit., p. 103.

108 Ibid., p. 374: A temple of Kālī with her image was erected in 1861 A.D. by
 Haracharya at Denghai, Sankhal Paragona road which was completed in 1872
 A.D. by a Jaina, Patil, D. R., op. cit., p. 103.

109 Patil, D. R., op. cit., p. 422.

showing the dominance of Śakti-worship in the area. A group of Śiva-Parvati on Mt. Kailāsa with Bhairava standing in front has also been depicted which leave no doubt in the connection of the site with the worship of Śakti. A collection of images, one representing the female figure destroying the man and the buffalo suggesting the image of the goddess Durgā Mahiṣamardini was also noticed by Barhaman at Senog (10 miles west of Sirechpura).¹¹⁰ Another important monument connected with Śakti-worship is the Chagghishām temple of Monghyr town (2 miles from the main town) built on a rock.¹¹¹ In a subterranean dark cave of the hillock with a stone on cauldron-shaped roof over which the temple stands, one eye is inscribed on the wall, which is worshipped as the representation of goddess Chagghī. The local tradition associates this place with Rājā Bhartuhari where he attained his Tāntric Śakti.¹¹² The depiction of the eye and its worship definitely connects it with Tāntricism. It was definitely treated as a Śākta pīṭha though it is difficult to identify this site with any of the Śākta pīṭhas mentioned by different authorities. The Karu Chaurā house in the Monghyr town¹¹³ is also connected with Devī according to the local tradition which also shows Tāntric influence. Naturally, Monghyr got a fair share of Tāntric heritage is proved beyond doubt.

In the District of Bhagalpur at Kheri Hill (10 miles south-west of Bhagalpur) a large block of stone slab has been found and which is known as Vajiravarushīla.¹¹⁴ This district too appears to have a long tradition of Śakti-worship. As Jabatgūn,¹¹⁵ close to Sultanpūr, is a rocky island called by this name and where the Śiva temple called Ajgābinātha is situated. A number of sculptures have been found here on piles of granite blocks, e.g. Hara-gauri, Kṛṣṇa, Rādhā, River goddess on lot vāhana etc.¹¹⁶ The

110 Patil, D. R., op. cit., p. 328.

111 Monghyr District, Gazetteer, 1960, 373.

112 Ibid.

113 Monghyr District Gazetteer, 1960, p. 373. The story of Vikrama getting 'Pāru' father from Devī for making gold and in pleasing the goddess, burning of himself in boiling ghee is also referred to which shows Tāntric affiliation.

114 Patil, D. R., op. cit., p. 306.

115 Ibid., p. 178.

116 Ibid.

depiction of goddess Gangā is interesting. The cult of Rādhā has also been popular in the Mithilā region. The sculptures belong to 2nd-3rd century A.D. according to Cunningham and 7th or 8th century A. D. according to Bloch.¹¹⁷ At Bhavantapur¹¹⁸ a temple of goddess Chandi has been found, built on an ancient site of perhaps a Buddhist temple of the 11th century A. D. A coloured female figure was discovered here, besides a damaged male figure of a warrior riding a tiger (now locally called Baidhai).¹¹⁹ On one of the fragments of carved door frame an inscription has been discovered which refer to the goddess Maheshvari.¹²⁰ At Maunāri¹²¹ (30 miles south of Bhagalpur) near the stairs of the Papahāri Tank is lying a stone on which a very rudely carved figure of a female deity, in relief, is called Papahāriki.¹²² Buchanan refers to another mutilated image of a goddess called Jigāntakā and also a damaged representation of the sacred cow or Kāma dhenu.¹²³ Beglar¹²⁴ noticed a large rock cut sculpture, rudely carved, representing a 'four-armed' three headed figure (male or female, is difficult to tell from its rudeness), standing on a squat prostrate figure and over the head in a canopy as of spreading branches of a tree. Beglar identifies it to be signifying the triumph of Brahminism over Buddhism—prostrate figure to be of Buddha. Col. Franklin calls it the image of Mahākālī.¹²⁵

117 *Ibid.*

118 *Ibid.*, pp. 18-19.

119 *Pall, D. R.*, op. cit., pp. 18-19.

120 *Ibid.* The female figure may be identified with this goddess. The inscription mentions one Śakti Singh Deva and the image of Buddha. One tradition connects the name of King Vikrāt of Nishanharā the other mentions that the fort was built by a Mughal general to fulfil a condition of marriage between him and the goddess, but due to the trick of the goddess the Mughal general could not build the fort.

121 *Ibid.*, p. 231.

122 *Ibid.*

123 *Ibid.*

124 *Ibid.*

125 *Ibid.*

Thus we find that the worship of Śakti in Mithilā can be traced back to 8th century B.C. or even earlier though we do not have archaeological proof to support its prevalence in the period earlier than 8th century B.C. This long tradition of Śakti-worship remains still unbroken in this land. In the Pāla-Sena period it was tainted by Tantricism. It was only due to the adherence to the people of this region to mother-cult prevalent earlier that Tantricism was readily accepted in this land, because in Tantricism feminine is elevated to the highest position. In spite of the fact that Śaivism and Vaiṣṇavism also became popular in the late medieval period Śaktism did not lose its ground because it had entered to the very bone-marrow of the Mithilias. Even to-day Śakti is widely worshipped in Mithilā and every where temples of goddesses particularly of Durgā or Kālī can be found. A large number of such temples were built or renovated by the Maharajas of Darbhanga.



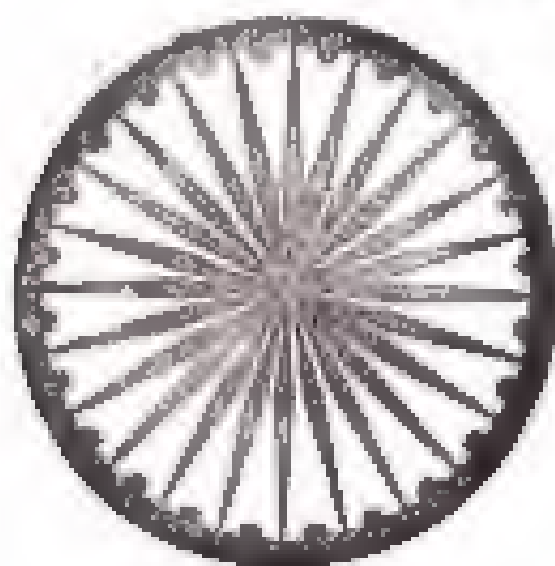
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